

not in Paul 2nd

13 cm

1500

A Short Historical Sketch

1906 -- 1931



Calgary Lodge No. 23

G. R. A. - F. A. M. & A. M.

0147444w
R13 20146

Sp. Coll

HS

560

C15 F8

1931

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAEASIS



2524616



THAT portion of Canada lying between the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia was, until 1905, included in the North-West Territories. In that year an Act of the Parliament of Canada erected the present Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan out of what were formerly known as the Territories of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Assiniboia.

The Grand Lodge of Manitoba, A F. & A.M., exercised jurisdiction over all of the Territories, and in accordance with custom, as soon as the new political boundaries were established, Grand Lodges were formed whose jurisdiction conformed with that of the Legislatures of the new Provinces. The Grand Lodge of Alberta came into being in 1905, with the hearty goodwill and assistance of that of Manitoba. There were at that time two Masonic Lodges in Calgary, viz., Bow River Lodge No. 1 and Perfection Lodge No. 9, on the present register.

At this time Calgary was a town with a population of some 8,000 deriving its living mainly from the cattle and horse ranches which then flourished in its vicinity. It was an important post of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, had been a divisional point on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway since 1901 as well as being the terminus of railways to Strathcona (for Edmonton) and Macleod. Coincident with the formation of the province new railway rates and arrangements made Calgary a wholesale distributing centre and gave it a start as a manufacturing city. Population increased very rapidly and new institutions became necessary.

It was under these circumstances that Calgary Lodge No. 23, A.F. & A.M., Grand Lodge of Alberta register, came into being. A number of masons came to reside in the city who did not affiliate with the existing lodges. Early in 1906 a movement was started to form another lodge from among the unaffiliated brethren and on October 25, 1906, a petition sponsored by Perfection Lodge was forwarded to the Grand Master asking for a dispensation. The names on the petition were:

Arthur Thompson	T. F. English
T. R. Flett	E. C. Perry
D. B. Niblock	W. R. Davis
E. B. Johnson	E. B. Thauburn
Joseph Cobbleddick	Robert L. Glover
Thos. Sharpe	E. S. Hotchkiss
Jas. Cooper, Jr.	J. W. Shelley
J. J. B. Little	George Law
Fred. St. C. Bent	F. Vaughan
W. E. Brown	Ashley Cooper
W. M. Armour	E. M. Doyle
Robt. Richardson	J. R. Hare
H. E. Anderson	A. S. Connor
H. P. D. Walker	H. G. H. Glass
A. K. Morrison	G. H. Webb
H. E. Gillies	J. C. Miller
E. H. Little	J. E. Roach
A. P. H. Cutten	A. Matthews
Jas. G. Wilson	Robt. Hanna
A. V. Bilton	J. B. C. Baker

In a few days this dispensation was received. It named as the principal officers:

T. F. English - Worshipful Master
 Frank Vaughan - Senior Warden
 William MacLaren - Junior Warden

and the lodge met for the first time on Friday, November 2, 1906.

The place of meeting was the Victoria Hall on Eighth Ave. East, being

the upper portion of the building now occupied by the Hall Hardware Co. This was owned by the late Bro. W. R. Hull, who rented it to Bow River Lodge, the new lodge sub-leasing it in turn from Bow River Lodge. The Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Bro. George H. Hogbin being present at the meeting to instal the officers.

The lodge consisted for the most part of young men. Of the 41 whose names were on the petition four were over 45 years of age, while 30 were under 40 years old. The oldest member was the late Brother Ezekiel Scott Hotchkiss, at that time United States Consul in Alberta. As the members present at the first meeting were all newcomers and not well known to each other, some little difficulty was experienced. The Worshipful Master had his old friend as Junior Warden, but was not sure that the brother who took possession of the West was the nominee of the Grand Master. In his difficulty he naturally applied to the Secretary who was also in doubt, but settled the question by asking the brother "how he spelled his name." This proved satisfactory and the work proceeded.

At an early date the lodge started on the compilation of by-laws so that same would be completed when it received its charter. They provided, as part of the order of business of the lodge at a regular meeting: "Appointment of instructors for newly admitted brethren." Thus early in its history the lodge provided for this important matter and in a novel way. The by-laws also provided that the Worshipful Master should have at his disposal proceeds of all voluntary offerings to use at his discretion in emergencies and until the lodge could be assembled and more decisive action taken.

On January 7, 1907, the lodge initiated its first candidate in the person of Bro. Donald M. Hawkins, who is not now a member of the lodge and who is thought to be residing in England.

In those days Grand Lodge met in February and the lodge received its charter in that month in 1907. The first meeting held as a chartered lodge was in March, 1907, but as the charter or warrant had not been received a dispensation was obtained from the newly installed Grand Master, the late M.W. Brother Hedley C.

Taylor. The lodge was consecrated on April 12, and on that day applications were received from three brethren who are still members and who are its oldest initiates. On conferring the degree of a Master Mason on May 1st the recipient was informed that he would receive his apron when he passed a satisfactory examination. This practice, then introduced in Calgary Lodge, has taken root in Alberta and is now generally adopted, at least in the larger places. In the fall of 1907 the Worshipful Master had a serious illness and the work of the lodge was carried on with the assistance of the Worshipful Masters of the other city lodges, one of whom was the late R.W. Bro. James N. Rankin.

In September the first official visit of a D.D.G.M. was made, the brother holding that office being the present Minister of Education in British Columbia, the Hon. Joshua Hinchcliffe.

Joint installation of officers by two or more lodges was customary in those years, and Calgary Lodge participated with Perfection Lodge in performing that ceremony in December, 1907.

The matter of relief for transient brethren became serious at this time

when settlers were pouring fast into the country, and in January, 1908, the Worshipful Master appointed a committee to confer with other city lodges on the subject. The result was the formation of the Board of Relief, which has functioned ever since. There were at this time four lodges in Calgary, Ashlar No. 28 having come into existence this year.

A matter of interest to members of the Eastern Star is found in the minutes of February 7, 1908, when application was made to the lodge to vouch for the masonic relationship of certain ladies who wished to form a chapter of that body, and for which authority was given.

At this early date the question of lodge room accommodation became important. The four lodges had several conferences through their representatives with the idea of erecting a building. These proved abortive largely because the committee could not make up its mind whether the new building should contain ten or twenty stories. Those were days of great expectations and ambitions. At length Perfection Lodge settled the matter by leasing a large hall in the old Alexander Corner then used as a

dancing academy. This was fitted up and decorated very nicely and was used by the lodge for 21 years. Calgary Lodge became the first tenant of Perfection Lodge, and for several months held its meetings in the upper room while the lodge room proper was being fitted up. Its first meeting in the new room being held on June 5, 1908. At the March meeting in 1908 the secretary alluded in the minutes to a "Postponed Regular Communication" and was reminded that "a lodge cannot adjourn from day to day."

On several occasions the lodge has received and complied with requests from other lodges to confer degrees. The first of these received in June, 1908, was from a lodge in Newfoundland.

The lodge has also contributed to the rehabilitation of lodges who suffered loss by fire. The first of these was in 1908 when the City of Fernie suffered. Not only has the lodge assisted in the restoration of furniture and equipment of lodges, but has contributed generously to relief of distressed communities, in most cases by voluntary contributions of the brethren, as well as from lodge funds.

An undercurrent of unrest began to show itself in the fall of 1908. The discipline of the lodge was relaxed and a very unpleasant condition developed. It became necessary to ask the first Worshipful Master to again rule and govern the lodge in 1909. This was done and the crisis passed.

Up to this time the lodge had kept very late hours. This was probably one of the causes of the unrest, and a change for the better was soon in evidence. In this year musical accompaniments to ritual began to appear. And the practice of holding vacations in July and August was introduced in 1909. This custom is now general but was not then observed, and some of the old-timers took objection to it.

The lodge became incorporated in 1910, taking advantage of an Act of the Legislature which incorporated the Grand Lodge of Alberta and which provided that similar powers could be obtained by it for its private lodges on their application and by payment of a nominal fee.

The Calgary General Hospital was not at this time a municipal institution, being supported largely by gifts and donations. The present building was

erected in 1910, and Calgary Lodge contributed the furniture of Ward No. 117.

A request of an unusual nature was received by the lodge in April, 1910. Eight Master Masons residing in Langdon asked permission to work under the jurisdiction of the lodge "until they could get a charter." This request, of course, could not be granted.

The death of His Majesty King Edward VII took place on the date of the regular communication in May, 1910. Work was, of course, suspended and the communication held on a later date by dispensation.

In October, 1910, mention is made for the first time of suspensions for N.P.D., and in April, 1911, death first struck at the lodge—Brother Arthur Thomson and Brother Henry Wolton passing away in that year.

The revision of the by-laws in 1913 provided that no application for membership would be received from a brother who had demitted from a lodge having concurrent jurisdiction. This was deleted from the by-laws some years later as unnecessary.

The breaking out of the Great War in 1914 brought several of the members of the lodge into the army and navy and letters from them were frequently read at the regular communications. One from Bro. Lorne G. Oliver was read on September 6, 1918, and at the next communication his death in action was announced. The dues of brethren in the services were, of course, remitted and all assistance possible rendered to their wives and families during their absence.

In September, 1915, a very unusual application was made to the lodge. It was from the wife of a brother who was suing for divorce from her, and her request was that the lodge give her financial assistance so that she could enter sufficient defence to obtain alimony. There must have been some merit in her case, for the W.M. recommended that her request be granted, and this was done. In 1918, when the great epidemic of influenza prevailed, lodge meetings were cancelled in obedience to orders from public health authorities.

In February, 1920, the Worshipful Master announced that he was leaving the city and his place was supplied

during the remainder of that year by the Past Masters. The following year a similar condition prevailed as the Worshipful Master left the city in April, to be followed by the Junior Warden in December. And in that same December, 1921, the lodge lost its Senior Warden under tragic circumstances. Brother Hubert John Cole was elected to that office on December 2nd and installed on December 16th. On December 20th he met his death by accident. He was a young man with a remarkably forceful personality who gave freely of his great talents to his fellowman through masonic channels. It is always an interesting speculation as to what course human affairs would have taken had such characters not been removed. There can be little doubt of the loss suffered by the lodge in this case, and Brother Cole's personality is still vivid in the minds and hearts of his brethren and friends.

The falling out of so many of the senior officers of the lodge in so short a time necessitated the election of a Past Master to the office of Worshipful Master for 1922.

In former days the Worshipful Master of a York Rite lodge wore a silk

hat while presiding in the lodge. The practice was followed by the first twelve Masters of the lodge and then discontinued. In February, 1923, a recommendation was made by the general purpose committee that it be revived, but the lodge showed no enthusiasm on the subject and so the Master now hangs his hat in the same place as his Craftsmen.

But it was decided in this year to change the method of presenting applications for initiation. Heretofore these had been handed to and read by the secretary. Since 1923 they are read by one or other of the sponsors to the application, who holds himself in readiness to answer any enquiry on the subject.

In 1928 the lodge passed a resolution, after considerable discussion, that lodge membership should not exceed 200 if that intimacy which should exist between the officers and craftsmen is desired.

In 1926 it became known that the Hudson's Bay Company had purchased the building containing the lodge room and offices with the intention of pulling it down and extending their store in its place, and enquiry showed that

there was very inadequate accommodation existing for lodge purposes in the city. An organization was then formed for the purpose of providing a Masonic Temple in Calgary. Eight out of the eleven existing craft lodges became members and were assessed \$10,000 each as their share of the cost. The brethren of Calgary Lodge responded very loyally and generously to this request, subscribing nearly the whole amount and only leaving some \$1,200 to be paid out of lodge funds. The result was the present temple on 12th Avenue West, which was dedicated on November 28th, 1928, and in which Calgary Lodge held its first communication in December, when the Annual Election of Officers took place. These were installed by the M.W. Grand Master on January 4, 1929.

Since the Book of Constitution was amended, providing for Life Membership in lodges, this distinction has been conferred by the lodge on two of its members, both of whom are living. In both cases it was made clear that the lodge was recognizing long and continuous service in the order and its desire to show its gratitude for same. Its holders, M.W. Bro. T. F. English and R.W. Bro. Thomas Sharpe, are

therefore entitled to regard it as a "distinction" of which they may feel proud.

The practice of visiting sister lodges grew up in the city some twenty years ago and for a long time it was confined to lodges meeting in Calgary. But the coming of the automobile has brought about a change. Frequent visits are now exchanged with lodges in the country towns adjacent to the city and are instrumental in providing a more extended intimacy and exchange of views than what used to obtain.

The influence of rising prices is noticed in the dues and fees of the lodge, which have increased from \$5 and \$50 to \$15 and \$100 respectively during its twenty-five years of life.

The membership of the lodge is at present 256, of whom 62 do not reside in the City of Calgary. In the course of its quarter century of existence the lodge has initiated nearly 300 masons and admitted to membership by affiliation some 175 brethren. For twenty years its annual income from dues has averaged \$2,000. Its annual expenses being a much smaller sum, it might naturally be expected to have

considerable vested wealth, but this is not the case. Apart from the \$10,000 of lodge funds in the Temple stock and some \$1,400 in a reserve for emergencies, the lodge possesses no property. Its income has from time to time been expended on various masonic objects and it has generously contributed to various public institutions which are not directly masonic. Its income has frequently been supplemented by the voluntary contributions made by its members in response to requests of the Worshipful Master and his recommendation of a worthy objective.

The lodge has had to administer justice and mete out punishment. It has had to consider applications from brothers for re-instatement after suspension. It has always tempered mercy with justice, freely welcoming those whose repentance it deemed sincere, but being stern without harshness with the callous or cynical applicants whose purpose in desiring readmittance was open to doubt.

The knowledge, wisdom and experience of the older brethren were always at the disposal of the master as is evidenced by the frequent mention of lectures on masonic, scientific and social subjects. And when occa-

sion required it there was always a skilful or learned brother ready to assist any who was less fortunate in his private affairs.

The attendance at lodge meetings is approximately 25 per cent of the total membership and at first sight this sounds disappointing. But a closer analysis gives more satisfactory results. First, there are a considerable number of the members non-residents of the city, many of these residing out of the province, and secondly the pressure of modern life especially in a commercial community is greater than it was 25 or 30 years ago. Attendance at all communications of the lodge can not reasonably be expected. Sometimes the principal officers find it difficult to do so. But setting a figure of attendance as one out of every three communications, and eliminating names of members residing out of the city, the percentage of attendance would indicate that a great majority of the members are keenly interested in masonry and the lodge. This is further attested by the ready and general response made to communications from the Worshipful Master which require direct answers by letter if not made in person.

The lodge has borne its share in the government of the craft, the Grand Master in 1926 having been the first Worshipful Master of the lodge. The office of Deputy Grand Master of District No. 1 has been held by three Past Masters of the lodge, while the present holder of the office of Grand Treasurer is a member of the lodge, who has held that office continuously for 15 years.

The associated organizations are also under some obligations to Calgary Lodge, its members having occupied places on the governing bodies of the Royal Arch and Knights Templars, while two of them enjoy the distinction of having been admitted to the 33° in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

The above are the salient features obtained from a close perusal of the lodge minutes since 1906. Apart from these the proceedings of the lodge seem to be very much of a routine character. But when the character of that routine is studied any feeling of disappointment will disappear, for it is a record of duties steadfastly attended to, the steady inculcation by precept and example of masonic tenets, the continuous upholding and mainten-

ance of masonic traditions. The lodge furnished an atmosphere or environment which must have had an elevating effect on the thoughts and actions of its members and by constant exercise it kept in good health the faculty of benevolence which it implanted or developed in their minds.

It may now be asked: "What is the result of all the time, energy and money expended by the lodge in the 25 years of its life?"

There are, of course, minds so constituted as to find a difficulty in understanding results unless they are expressed in figures or quantities of tangible things. To these kind of people a police force would be judged by the number of arrests made and convictions obtained. But better balanced minds would judge it by the peace and good order of the community in its charge. These cannot be measured or weighed, and such is the test that should apply to a lodge.

Masonry came into existence as an order or association of men many centuries ago. It has been subjected to persecution from without and from the more deadly effect of coldness or indifference from within. But it has

endured and survived. It gave to the world a religion without dogma and its continued existence and the high position it occupies in the public esteem are strong presumptive proofs of its usefulness to society.

The characteristic features of the modern world are its great humane-ness and its great toleration. Never before was the public conscience so sensitive. Never before could new ideas and opinions be expressed so freely and be given so much general consideration. And never before was the tribunal of public opinion so reliable a court of appeal in equity.

Those familiar with the masonic environment will understand the connection and give their support to the claims of masonry as having in a silent and unobtrusive way been a powerful influence in developing the growth of these civilizing and ennobling influences.

And Calgary Lodge as part of a great whole can claim to have justified its existence by contributing to this result.

Twenty-five years hence a chronicler may be writing the history of half a century of the life of Calgary Lodge.

May he be able to record that in the second twenty-five years of its existence the light has burned brilliantly on its altar and that the edifice of national character now being erected may show on its stones the marks of the craftsmen of Calgary Lodge.



